of each hadith. An unbroken chain of narrators was traced for each hadith and each transmitter's life was analysed from all angles to validate his trustworthiness.

Hadith: A Source of Tazkiyah

None of the sayings of the Prophet of Islam recorded in the books of hadith are purely abstract in sense. Indeed every saying has a background. That is to say, each *hadith* describes the situation that the Prophet found himself in and how did he respond to these situations. In this way, each saying of the Prophet relates to a particular set of circumstances. All the sayings of the Prophet are of relevance to practical human situations.

> God grants to peace what He does not grant to violence.
>
> The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

If a person is able to deepen his understanding to an extent that he is able to visualize the background while reflecting on the *hadith* this will be like being in the presence of the Prophet.

Another very effective method of enhancing the impact of *hadith* is to sit in a group, preferably in a mosque and for one person from the group read out the *hadith*. Listening enhances retention and is a preferred method of approaching religious learning vis-à-vis reading. Angels surround a gathering in which Allah is praised and in which believers are trying to enhance their understanding of Islam. In this way, there will be a manifold enhancement of his impression of *hadith*. This recreates the manner of the gathering of the Companions (*Sahabah*) around the Prophet in the Mosque of the Prophet.

> Allah does not look at your body and face, rather, He looks at your heart.
>
> The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

If a person repeatedly engages in such a practice, he will see that slowly the light of Allah shall penetrate his soul and he will become evermore distinguishing and conscientious. The unwholesome impact of the world shall be reduced and his natural state affirmed.

> If Allah wants to do good to somebody, He afflicts him with trials.
>
> The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

This is one of the creative ways of studying the Hadith. And studying the Hadith in this creative manner is undoubtedly the greatest source of purification (*tazkiyah*).

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About the Hadith

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Hadith, meaning a "statement" or "report", is used as an Islamic term for the records kept of the sayings and doings of the Prophet Muhammad. Sunnah means the actions the Prophet himself performed, or actions he asked his followers to perform. The Hadith is a record of the Sunnah.

> God has more compassion for His servants than a woman does for her child.
>
> The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

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Hadith provides the second fundamental source of Islam, giving us a full account of the life of the Prophet, and serving as a commentary on the Quran.

The Quran principally deals with basics. It is the Hadith which gives the details and necessary explanations of Quranic injunctions. For instance, the Quran says: "Establish the service of worship." But it does not specify how the worship has to be performed. Not even the timings and units of prayers (rak'ahs) are clearly mentioned. We need the traditions set forth in the Hadith to have full information on this.

> He who lacks kindness of heart lacks all good.
>
> The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

> God loves those believers who labour to earn a living by lawful means.
>
> The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

Even after knowing the details, it might still not have been possible to follow the divine injunctions contained in the Quran. For not everything can be properly understood by words alone. Therefore, the Prophet demonstrated to the faithful how prayer was to be performed. He said to the believers: "Look at me, see how I worship, and follow me."

The Quran repeatedly reminds us of the importance of Hadith, enjoining us to strictly follow the Prophet:

> "...Obey God and obey the messenger..." (*Al-Nisa*, 4:59).

It is as if the Quran is the text and the Hadith the commentary, the Quran being the theory and the Hadith the practice. The Quran and Hadith are complementary to one another and are thus inseparable. Both are equally essential for the establishment of religion.

> The human heart, like iron, is liable to rust. The remembrance of death and recitation of the Quran protects the heart from getting tarnished.
>
> The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

About Sunnah

The contemporaries of the Prophet are known as the Companions, or sahabah. Because the Companions believed in the message of the Prophet, all his actions served as a precedent for them and every word falling from his lips became a commandment to them; and they were anxious to follow each one as faithfully as they could. During the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad, many of his Companions learnt by heart whatever he said, and keenly observed whatever he did, all of which they shared with each other. They naturally thirsted after the knowledge of what he said or did, so that many, like Abu Hurayrah, Anas ibn Malik and Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, kept constant company with him in order to observe and hear his every word and deed. Ai'sha, the Prophet's wife, was the first among women to tell of the Prophet's sayings and doings. She reported more than two thousand hadith, while Abu Hurayrah related more than five thousand hadith.

> Live in this world as though you are a stranger or a traveller.
>
> The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

Later, the sayings were compiled by various collectors of hadith. In this regard, Bukhari and Muslim are the first to have applied the most rigorous measures to ascertain the reliability

> Narrate the virtues of the dead and refrain from revealing their sins.
>
> The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ